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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0136/2023**

14.2.2023

## MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation of human rights defenders in Eswatini, notably the murder of Thulani Maseko  
(2023/2551(RSP))

**Pedro Marques, Hannes Heide**  
on behalf of the S&D Group

**European Parliament resolution on the situation of human rights defenders in Eswatini, notably the murder of Thulani Maseko (2023/2551(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Cotonou Agreement,
  - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
  - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
  - having regard to Rule 144 of its rules of procedure,
  - Whereas, Eswatini is an absolute monarchy under King Mswati III, under whom human rights and fundamental freedoms are curtailed and political parties are outlawed;
  - Whereas, the ban on delivery of petitions at Tinkhundla centers spurred massive unrest in June 2021 when security forces cracked down on protests killing 46 people and seriously injuring many others;
  - Whereas, pro-democracy MPs Mthandeni Dube and Bacede Mabuza have been in jail since July 2021 facing trumped up terrorism charges and repeatedly denied bail; Whereas on 22 September 2022 they were assaulted by masked intruders in their cells;
  - Whereas, on December 7, 2022, there was an assassination attempt on Maxwell Nkambule, the lawyer representing pro-democracy protesters;
  - Whereas, on January 21 2023, human rights lawyer and opposition activist, Thulani Maseko was brutally murdered in front of his family; Whereas hours earlier, the King warned those calling for democratic reforms that mercenaries would “deal with them”;
  - Whereas security forces perpetrate systematic intimidation of trade unionists and violations of fundamental workers’ rights including non-application of ILO convention 87;
1. Firmly condemns the murder of Thulani Maseko. Calls for a thorough and independent investigation, led by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights together with the UN into the murder.
  2. Demands the immediate release of MPs Mthandeni Dube and Bacede Mabuza, recalling their basic rights of access to justice, medical care and freedom of expression. Calls on authorities to carry out an open and impartial investigation into their detention.
  3. Calls on Eswatini to release all political prisoners and halt the excessive use of against protestors, and detention of those expressing opposing views to the monarchy. Considers the imprisonment of political activists to be in clear contravention of

commitments under the Cotonou Agreement. Calls on Eswatini to take measures to establish a legislative framework allowing the registration and activity of political parties, in line with international human rights obligations.

4. Demands Eswatini immediately stop the systematic harassment and arrests of trade unionists and to fully respect its obligations as a member of the ILO. Urgently calls on authorities to engage in a process of social dialogue with workers to find solutions to the challenges facing the country.
5. Calls on Eswatini to immediately halt the practice of using private military companies to manage pro-democracy activists. Calls in particular on South Africa to investigate allegations that mercenaries from its territory have been operating in Eswatini and whether they have links to the murder of Thulani Maseko. Calls on SADC to play a proactive role in mediating the political crisis including through the establishment of a national dialogue.
6. Instruct its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, EEAS, the ACP, the African Union, and the Southern African Development Community.